



TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW

Town Manager's Report

September 14, 2021

Good evening:

There have been some significant personnel changes over the last several weeks. The Town has accepted the resignations of several key employees, Aimee Petrosky, our Health Director, Geordie Emmanuel, Deputy Director in Recreation, Donna Bowman, our Health Inspector, Rebecca Jones, the Planning Department administrative assistant, Karl Wilson from IT and Board of Health members, Karen Robitaille and Dr. Sarah McAdoo. These resignations present significant challenges for those Departments and for the Town as a whole. We still have not filled a position in the Assessor's office and there are vacancies in the Recreation Department as well. The Planning Department will temporarily modify its hours for public access until a new administrative assistant can be hired.

As you know, the Board of Health recently issued a mask mandate for public indoor spaces in Town. Health Department staff continue to closely monitor the Town's positive Covid case numbers and positivity rates. They are also responsible for Covid compliance in the community.

Based on my observations of Town Department Heads and staff performance over the past many months, I trust that the public will continue to be served with courtesy and efficiency while we recruit and fill all vacant positions or search for alternative ways to accomplish the Town's business. The Department Heads, staff and Board members are doing their best to fulfill all of their responsibilities under circumstances which are often difficult.

The summer months for East Longmeadow's Finance Department are anything but slow. It is the time when our financial professionals review the first quarter operations of the fiscal year, complete all necessary close out procedures for the prior fiscal year, begin planning for anticipated budget issues for the upcoming year, prepare for the annual audit, prepare the balance sheets for free cash certification and prepare for classification hearings in order to set the tax rate. Added to those responsibilities this year are the accounting and reporting submissions required for the Covid relief funds received by the community. There have also been many ongoing discussions about improving our grants reporting process and memorialization of policies and procedures. ARPA funding and the contracts resulting therefrom are also subject to review during this period, as are the various financial impacts of ongoing labor negotiations.

The IT Department has upgraded the WIFI in all schools, school administrative staff have new computers, elementary school teachers received laptops in the summer, paraprofessionals were issued chromebooks at the start of the school year and old chromebooks are being cycled out and replaced with new ones. Touch screen chromebooks have been added for kindergarten and first grade.

The core network replacement switches are in and awaiting configuration. Delivery of a new rack in October will allow for better organization of the wiring and layout of the server room. We continue to work on process to decentralize payroll, essentially uploading individual department information directly into MUNIS and time off approval workflow. Successful configuration of these tasks will modernize our processes while we continue to evaluate vendors for this process.

The Recreation Department has its usual series of events planned for September. A Farmer's Market, Town tag sale, Drive in Movie and participation in the bike rodeo are on tap. Also there are 24 soccer teams from Little Kickers, Big Kickers and grades 1-2.

The Eastern Hampden County Veterans District continues its efforts to reorganize in compliance with appropriate administrative requirements. Representatives from the Veterans Affairs Department in Boston

have been in East Longmeadow to assist in training for our new Officer to insure no interruption in payment of benefits to our veterans. The District has asked the State Veterans Affairs Office for a temporary waiver of compliance with staffing requirements to allow the communities to re-evaluate whether continuing the District is the best use of municipal funds to serve the veterans in our community.

The Westcomm Board met on September 3, 2021. The District continues to move forward acquiring new communities, Ware will be added in November of this year. A Project Manager will be hired after solicitation of Qualifications to oversee the renovations, for which future bonding is anticipated. A regional meeting of the State 911 office and representatives from EOPSS is scheduled for September 28, 2021 in Chicopee. Employee training and retention rates continue to go well, allowing for the reassignment of supervisors from working actual calls to supervising the line dispatch personnel.

Negotiations continue with the Police Union which will be discussed in greater detail in an Executive session. The feasibility study drawings have been completed after discussions with Chief Williams and Joe Dunn of DPW and are now with the architect. We await a price proposal which will be shared upon receipt.

I am waiting for a response to the Town's contract offer from one of the units in the municipal employees administrative Union. The annual performance review of each of the Department Heads to discuss their progress, challenges and achievements for the past fiscal year as well as their needs in the current year are nearly complete.

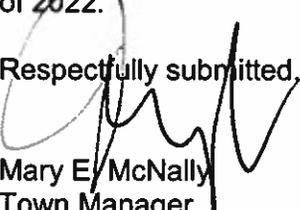
In the meanwhile, Karen Korpinen, the newly hired Deputy Town Manager, has begun assisting Bethany Yeo in the implementation of several aspects of the Master Plan and various other grant programs. The Master Plan calls for the creation of an Implementation Committee and a Citizens Academy. The intention is to schedule an Open House event in October to follow up on and hopefully capitalize on the energy created by the completion of the Master Plan. Karen will also be working on plans for a grant application process for the use of ARPA funds by businesses and residents within the community and development of an application for residual community mitigation funds from the Mass Gaming Commission.

Much work has been done to draft a new Community Preservation Plan for the Town. The draft is under review by the committee and will be available soon.

I recently appointed Andrea Driscoll, a long time East Longmeadow resident to the Historical Commission.

I anticipate the review of Capital project submissions to begin in late November and be completed by January of 2022.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary E. McNally
Town Manager